



Tree Board 2025 Annual Report

City of Lake Forest Park

Introduction

This report summarizes the work conducted by the Tree Board for calendar year 2025 as well as the current board term status.

- The Lake Forest Park Tree Board advises the City Council, with a primary responsibility for making policy and regulatory recommendations concerning the management of trees and forest canopy in Lake Forest Park.
- Additionally, the Tree Board holds the responsibility of providing outreach and education to the community on tree-related issues, including, but not limited to, organizing public events involving trees.

Tree Board Members during 2025*

Commissioner	Term Expires	Status
Mark Phillips (^)	2/28/26	Active
Victoria Kutasz (^^)	2/28/28	Active
Richard Olmstead	2/28/26	Active
Stacey Spain	2/28/28	Active
Doug Sprugel	2/28/27	Active
Richard Saunders	2/28/26	Active

^ Chair; ^^ Vice Chair

* There was one vacant board position as of December 31, 2025, with one member, Richard Olmstead, planning to retire in February 2026 after serving multiple terms. Board members Saunders and Phillips wish to be reappointed for an additional term. Three new board members were appointed in January 2026 (Ross Baarslag-Benson, Minda Martin, and Kyle Gati), bringing the number of members to eight going forward.

Planning Staff & Council Liaison 2025

Staff Member	Title
Sam Kull	Urban Forest Planner
Drue Epping	Urban Forest Planner (January – July 2025)
Elizabeth Talavera	Assistant Planner

City Council Liaison	Title
Larry Goldman	Councilmember

Work Plan Accomplishments

Advise the Mayor and City Council on tree-related issues

- Contributed forest/tree input to the Climate Element of the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, Stacey Spain and Victoria Kutasz served on the Climate Policy Advisory Team.
- Assisted the Urban Forest Planner in completing two grant applications:
 - Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI) - a \$70,000 grant to fund a review and evaluation of LFP's management of its community forest. The outputs of this study will enable updating of LFP's Community Forest Management Plan.
 - King Conservation District Canopy Analysis – will allow understanding of the extent of LFP's forest canopy from several additional and more detailed perspectives: wetlands, land use zones, individual parcels, precincts.
- Began discussion of updating LFP's Community Forest Management Plan by reviewing current plan and looking at other cities' comparable documents.
- Maintained code amendment recommendations to the City Council, developed last year, concerning the list of acceptable replacement trees and the definition of exceptional trees. These recommendations are waiting for council consideration.

Public Outreach and Education on Trees

Tree Board members distributed educational materials and spoke to citizens about our city's community forest at several community events during the year. We were able to answer some tree questions, refer residents to the Urban Forest Planner for others, and encourage several people to consider becoming Tree Board members.

- Green Fair – March 29
- Arbor Day – April 27, including a guided tree walk around Horizon View Park
- Joint meeting with Climate Action Committee – June 3.
- Picnic in the Park – September 6
- Farmers Market – October 5, including a tree identification challenge
- Climate Hub opening – October 12

Richard Olmstead contributed an article for the City newsletter on the highly invasive European Holly tree.